

School inspection report

28 to 30 January 2025

Newton Preparatory School

149 Battersea Park Road

London

SW8 4BX

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The school is well led and managed. Leaders have suitable knowledge and skills and use them effectively to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is promoted and prioritised. The proprietor and advisory school council maintain effective oversight of leaders' work. Collectively, the proprietor and leaders evaluate the school's performance, plan for its future development and ensure that the requirements of the Standards are consistently met.
2. Leaders provide pupils with a curriculum that is meticulously planned around how subjects link together so that pupils can deepen their understanding of the content, concepts, knowledge and skills that they need to acquire. The skilfully planned curriculum, including for the youngest children in the early years, is supported by well-considered resources and equipment, including digital technologies. Leaders regularly review this curriculum offer, constantly seeking ways in which to improve the opportunities for pupils, for example through the 'Newton diploma'. Pupils develop a rich understanding of the topics they study and apply their learning in different contexts with confidence, independence and complexity. Curriculum provision is a significant strength of the school.
3. Lessons are well planned and adapted to meet pupils' needs. Teachers make effective use of a wide range of resources to engage and motivate pupils. They are skilful in their questioning and encourage discussion and debate in lessons. Consequently, pupils are curious and creative, share their ideas and value the opinions of others. Teachers provide effective feedback to pupils so that they understand how to improve their work. Assessment data is analysed well by senior leaders. On occasion, teachers do not use this information as well, especially in newer areas of the curriculum, to identify where some pupils are ready to apply their learning in more complex ways.
4. The school's extensive facilities are well designed and maintained. There are appropriate levels of supervision and support for pupils, on site and during off-site educational activities. Pupils' physical, emotional and mental health needs are prioritised by leaders. Staff are effective in teaching pupils how to work, play and care for one another. Pupils collaborate well with each other in lessons and at social times. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are positive and standards of behaviour are high.
5. Pupils develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Leaders and staff listen carefully to pupils and encourage them to express their views. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities to select their level of challenge in class, perform in front of an audience and take on positions of responsibility, including through the school parliament. Pupils have a good understanding of and consistently demonstrate the school's values of respect, tolerance and integrity. They develop a deep understanding of diversity.
6. The school has a strong safeguarding culture with robust policies and procedures. Staff are appropriately trained to identify and report any safeguarding concerns. These are effectively acted on by the safeguarding team to ensure pupils' safeguarding needs are met in a timely and effective manner. Leaders ensure all appropriate staff recruitment checks are completed effectively.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that teaching uses the pupil performance information, including in newer areas of the curriculum, to identify where pupils are ready to apply their learning in more complex ways.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Leaders ensure that the school delivers an education in line with its aim to provide a forward-thinking educational experience that equips children for life in the future. Leaders create a warm, positive and inclusive atmosphere. The wellbeing and needs of pupils are central to decision-making. Leaders have established highly effective relationships with pupils and their families. The school is well led and managed. Leaders are highly respected and valued by staff, parents and pupils.
8. The proprietor is well informed about the school's work through regular meetings with senior leaders and through maintaining a strong presence in school. The proprietor is well supported by a board of experienced advisers on the school council who challenge the leadership as appropriate and maintain effective oversight of school policies and procedures. Together, the proprietor and school council monitor the school's performance closely, through a structure of committees and regular visits to the school, ensuring that leaders are suitably knowledgeable and carry out their roles effectively, and that the requirements of the Standards are met.
9. Leaders have a thorough understanding of the strengths in the school's provision and are proactive and transparent about how the school can continue to improve. The detailed school development plan is regularly reviewed and amended to ensure that its effective implementation and intended outcomes are in line with the school's aims. Leaders and staff continually review and are ambitious to improve the curriculum on offer, for example through initiatives such as a new reading scheme in the early years, the introduction of archaeology in Year 6, and the 'Newton Diploma' in Years 7 and 8.
10. The proprietor and leaders ensure that there is a thorough approach to managing risk. Depending on their roles, staff are appropriately trained to identify and plan to mitigate risk. Leaders and staff understand the contextual risks and, where needed, any specific risks for individual pupils. Leaders ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place across a wide range of activities, including those on and off the school site. The school makes good use of its extensive facilities and effectively promotes the safety of pupils on trips and visits. Risk assessments are monitored and reviewed regularly.
11. Leaders implement their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The accessibility plan is appropriate, regularly reviewed and identifies suitable measures to ensure effective access to the school, the curriculum and its wide-ranging provision.
12. The proprietor and leaders regularly review school policies and ensure they are effectively implemented across the school. The required information is provided and available to parents on the school's website and via the school's prospectus. Parents receive regular reports about the progress made by their children. Leaders provide the local authority with appropriate information relating to pupils where required, including information relating to additional funding for those who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
13. Complaints from parents are relatively few, but those that do occur are handled effectively and appropriately according to the school's clear complaints policy. Leaders keep a thorough record of complaints and actions taken in response to them.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

14. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

15. Leaders' methodically planned curriculum enables pupils to develop a rich knowledge and understanding through the skilful interlinking of subjects. For example, in drama, pupils act, direct and film scenes and use computing lessons to edit their films in preparation for the school's 'N-Oscars' show. In religious studies lessons, pupils debate views of resurrection using a court-style approach, developing their understanding of democracy. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 develop critical thinking skills through the two-year Newton diploma programme, which links geography, history, religious studies, art and drama.
16. Leaders ensure that the intricately planned curriculum uses a wide range of suitable resources and specialist equipment effectively. Technology, including artificial intelligence, is well embedded and pupils are confident in using it to deepen their understanding. For example, pupils track live world weather patterns in geography, compose digital soundtracks in music and use timelapse video to review their own learning in art. Pupils learn a variety of programming languages and develop strong coding skills.
17. The strengths in leaders' approach to curriculum planning ensures the youngest children get off to the strongest start in their learning. The early years curriculum is well thought out and adapted to children's aptitudes and needs. Adults provide a good range of planned activities to help develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in areas such as number, drawing, writing, communication and reading. Children also explore and develop their learning through play, in a well-resourced environment, where skilled adults provide great care, support and encouragement. Children show a deep understanding of the topics learnt and apply these independently in their free play. Consequently, by the end of Reception, children are very well prepared for moving on to Year 1.
18. Pupils achieve well across year groups and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning, including the youngest children. By the end of Year 8, pupils have well-developed skills and knowledge across the curriculum, including age-appropriate reading, writing and mathematical skills, ready for their next stages of study. Many are successful in gaining places at selective senior schools.
19. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their areas of expertise. They use questioning effectively to challenge and encourage deeper thinking. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and debate in lessons. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' views and adapt lessons in response to pupils' interests and discussions. Pupils become learners who can justify opinions and think critically, and are ambitious, curious and creative in their responses. They feel confident to share their ideas and are respectful of the opinions of others.
20. Teachers use a range of information about what pupils know and can do, to ensure lessons are tailored to meet the needs of pupils. Teachers' feedback enables pupils to actively review their work and understand how to improve it further. Leaders measure and analyse data on pupils' performance well. Occasionally, however, teachers, especially in newer areas of the curriculum, do not use this information with sufficient precision to identify pupils who are ready to apply their learning in more complex ways.

21. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified quickly, and appropriate support is planned and provided. Leaders provide clear advice, information and training in how pupils can be supported. Teachers adapt their lessons well to ensure that lessons meet pupils' learning needs. Teaching assistants provide targeted support in lessons, and where needed, provide individual or small-group support in addition to their daily lessons.
22. There are several pupils in the school who speak English as an additional language (EAL). An EAL coordinator effectively oversees the identification of pupils' needs and organises any additional provision that pupils require. Pupils receive effective support in class and, where needed, receive further effective classes, often consisting of small-group work, in addition to their lessons. This enables pupils who have EAL to learn effectively and access the curriculum alongside their peers.
23. The extra-curricular programme is extensive and well attended. A wide selection of academic, sporting, creative and performing arts opportunities develops pupils' skills in a range of areas, such as choir, classics, chess, yoga, Italian, computer animation and literature.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 24. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

25. Leaders have created a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme which includes relationships and sex education (RSE). Pupils study topics such as growing up, relationships, respect, healthy diets, online safety and anti-bullying. This helps them to develop their understanding of moral issues, such as those relating to equality and rights, and develop self-awareness, physically, emotionally and mentally. The school provides parents with information so that they may support the teaching of these issues at home. The quality of this programme is monitored by leaders and refined in response to feedback from pupils, staff and parents, to ensure it is effective.
26. Staff actively promote the school's values of respect, tolerance, perseverance, integrity, consideration and aiming high. Staff model and promote these values enthusiastically. Staff listen carefully to pupils, encourage discussion and debate and value their successes and praise for others. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the school's values and demonstrate them consistently on a daily basis. Children in the early years are gently enabled to express their feelings, encouraging increased self-knowledge and confidence. Older pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are further developed through the many opportunities to perform and speak in front of others. They confidently express their emotions and are aware of and sensitive to the needs of others.
27. Leaders are effective in managing behaviour, including through the use of rewards and celebration assemblies, which promote consistently high standards of conduct. On the very few occasions that poor behaviour occurs, it is resolved quickly and appropriately by staff, who are clear and consistent in their expectations, and effective in communicating with each other and the pupils involved. Bullying is rare. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and consistently by well-trained staff.
28. Leaders prioritise opportunities for pupils to raise concerns or get additional support for their emotional and mental health. Leaders provide a range of ways for pupils to raise concerns with an adult in school. In addition to speaking to any member of staff, pupils can make an appointment or call in to see one of the many staff who are trained as mental health champions. Pupils can also raise their concerns easily in school or at home via email.
29. Leaders provide a physical education (PE) programme that enables pupils to be physically active, engage in a range of sports and exercise regularly. Pupils are taught about the importance of warming up and have access to a range of sports and exercise. They also access a range of competitive opportunities, through matches against other schools. Pupils are enthusiastic, highly engaged and develop physical skills through their PE curriculum and wider opportunities. Pupils also learn about the importance of healthy eating, and how to make good choices, including from the healthy food served for school lunch.
30. A wide range of responsibilities across the school enables pupils to develop their leadership skills. For example, the lower and upper school pupil councils have used the collective views of the wider pupil body to develop green spaces across the school site and make changes to the range of clubs and the lunch food menu. Pupils develop strong leadership skills and experiences.

31. Staff are effectively deployed, including in the early years, to maintain the required ratios, so that pupils are well supervised in lessons, during breaktimes, and during off-site activities and outings. Adults provide close and appropriate supervision and are responsive to the needs of pupils.
32. The school's extensive facilities are well maintained through a rigorous system of checks and maintenance. Health and safety procedures are effective and regularly monitored. Fire safety procedures are appropriately undertaken, including the suitable installation and regular checking of fire equipment and regular fire drills. Leaders seek relevant external specialist expertise to maintain all health and safety requirements, including staff training requirements. Any actions recommended by external assessors are promptly acted upon.
33. First aid is delivered in a caring and timely manner. A dedicated medical room with a well-qualified nurse provides effective support for pupils' needs. Suitably trained staff, including early years staff trained in paediatric first aid, provide effective and immediate care if a pupil is unwell. The school identifies and caters well for the dietary needs of the pupils.
34. The admission register and attendance records are suitably maintained and appropriately monitored in accordance with statutory guidance. Leaders work effectively with staff, parents and pupils to address any absenteeism or concerns. Leaders inform the local authority of any pupils leaving or joining the school at non-standard transition times.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

35. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

36. Leaders regularly review the curriculum and resources available to ensure that they promote inclusion, including representation of the school's diverse community. Issues such as segregation, prejudice and events such as the Holocaust are discussed and debated in lessons and further developed in assemblies. Pupils develop an appreciation of different faiths, lifestyles and beliefs. For example, in theology and philosophy lessons pupils learn about the major world faiths. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to a wide range of places of worship in London, including churches, mosques and temples. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the importance of equality, diversity and respect.
37. Teachers enable pupils to serve the wider community through links with local institutions and charities. For example, Year 8 pupils visit local schools to help lead sports lessons as part of their sports leadership programme. Pupils select and lead projects to support local and national charities including for those who are homeless. Children in the early years donate their toys and clothing to local charities. Pupils sing at local care homes at Christmas and Year 8 captains visit the Royal Trinity Hospice. These activities help pupils to develop a strong understanding of the value of charity work and a sense of responsibility towards local communities.
38. Staff are effective in teaching pupils how to work and play together. The youngest children learn how to share, take turns, listen and wait patiently. As they get older, pupils are taught how to cooperate with each other in the classroom and on the sports fields. The PSHE programme covers topics such as friendship and respect, enabling pupils to learn about the importance of supporting and encouraging each other. Consequently, pupils collaborate effectively and develop appropriate social skills.
39. Leaders have designed an effective curriculum programme to develop pupils' awareness of future career choices. This programme includes a range of speakers, sometimes parents, who make presentations to pupils about their work in areas such as journalism, medicine, the media and corporate business. Older pupils lead assemblies on how particular subjects, such as mathematics, can lead to career choices.
40. Teachers develop pupils' economic understanding effectively. Pupils learn about a range of information including the role of bank accounts, interest rates, taxes and budgeting skills. These are developed through fundraising activities at Christmas and summer fairs, where pupils manage their own stalls, and as part of the Year 8 mini-enterprises project, when pupils design and manage their own small businesses.
41. Teaching about the democratic process, the rule of law and the role of Parliament are supplemented by educational visits and information from visiting speakers such as a local Member of Parliament. Pupils learn about and develop an understanding of different British institutions and services, including through visits from the fire brigade, police, doctors and dentists. Pupils are effectively prepared for responsibilities and opportunities in British society.
42. Pupils contribute to their own community through the school parliaments, actively suggesting ideas to improve the school. Older pupils act as good role models for the younger ones when taking up roles of responsibility such as playground buddies and house captains.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

43. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

44. Knowledgeable and well-trained leaders have established effective safeguarding arrangements. Processes and procedures are in line with up-to-date statutory guidance, and reflected in the safeguarding policy, which is available on the school's website.
45. Staff are appropriately trained including through induction for new staff. Staff training consists of annual statutory training and a raft of regular updates, articles, podcasts, meetings and training sessions across the year. This training also includes appropriate training related to the 'Prevent' duty, and policy and procedures related to radicalisation and extremism. Staff understand their responsibilities, are vigilant, and report any concerns in a timely manner.
46. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities under the school's code of conduct. They understand the whistleblowing policy and the school's safeguarding procedures, including those relating to allegations against staff, and use them appropriately. The proprietor and headteacher keep a detailed log of any concerns and respond to issues quickly and effectively, including liaising with relevant external agencies, when needed.
47. Leaders respond to concerns effectively. They liaise well with external agencies, when appropriate, to seek advice and refer safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding leaders work closely and effectively with the school mental health leads and pastoral staff to identify and monitor pupils' needs and concerns. The safeguarding team keeps appropriate records of any concerns and the decisions and actions taken in response to them.
48. Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the contextual safeguarding risks of the school and are effective in taking mitigating action. For example, staff and external specialists provide guidance to pupils on how to travel safely around London.
49. Leaders ensure that the pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This includes planned and regular online safety lessons which, together with an appropriate internet filtering system, contribute to supporting pupils' safety when online. Leaders use the information from filtering and monitoring systems to ensure that all online activity in school and on school devices is appropriate.
50. The single central record (SCR) of appointments is well maintained. All appropriate pre-employment recruitment checks are carried out and recorded. Leaders are appropriately trained in safer recruitment and take a key role in the recruitment of new staff.
51. The proprietor and advisory board regularly review the school's safeguarding work to ensure that everyone follows appropriate procedures whenever safeguarding concerns arise. These checks by the proprietor and advisory board include on-site visits, review of records, discussions with pupils, headteacher reports on safeguarding, and reviews of the effectiveness of the online filtering and monitoring system.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 52. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Newton Preparatory School
Department for Education number	212/6385
Address	149 Battersea Park Road London SW8 4BX
Phone number	020 77204091
Email address	head@newtonprep.co.uk
Website	https://www.newtonprepschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Dr Farouk Walji
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Fleming
Age range	3 to 13
Number of pupils	635
Date of previous inspection	22 to 25 March 2022

Information about the school

53. Newton Preparatory School is a co-educational independent day school located in Battersea, London. It was founded in 1991 by a single proprietor, Dr Farouk Walji. A school council comprised of 15 members, including the headteacher and the proprietor, provide advisory support. There are four sub-committees of the school council. The school is divided into two sections, lower school for pupils in Nursery to Year 2, and upper school for pupils in Years 3 to 8.
54. There are 131 children in the early years comprising two Nursery classes and four Reception classes.
55. The school has identified 75 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
56. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 164 pupils.
57. The school states that its aims are to ensure that every child is given the opportunity to flourish and develop in all areas of school life. It aims to listen and respond to pupils and celebrate and embrace difference and diversity. The school seeks to encourage every pupil to make a positive contribution to school life. It endeavours to prepare each pupil for senior school entrance examinations and to provide a forward-thinking educational experience that equips the children for future life.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

28 to 30 January 2025

58. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

59. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor and members of the advisory board
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the facilities for physical education and learning support
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

60. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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